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SUBJECT Prospects of the Opposition

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PRELIMINARY

1. Q. Is there any possibility of the present Yugoslav regime turning against Moscow?

A. At the present time [late November 1947], none. The men who are running the party, and, through it the Government, have been selected and trained in the USSR. The foremost quality required was that they follow throughout their party membership the party line, even though it is very often changed and may be contrary to the orthodox Marxist doctrine. Such men, who have followed the party in everything it chose to lay down; who have defended all deviations of the party policy; who themselves have employed hair-splitting arguments to justify whatever the party decreed; who have never expressed doubt to any move; who have never belonged to any minority in the party--such men were selected to lead the uprising during the war and to run the country now.

There is no doubt that the present regime is aware of the fact that its very existence is dependent on the USSR. The men leading the country now can be replaced if they do not satisfy the USSR's wishes or do not carry out the tasks assigned to them in a way that the USSR deems satisfactory.

The same men are also aware that they stand and fall with the Soviet regime. And finally, they are as a whole too much indoctrinated to turn again the USSR. Maybe individually some of them would, for various reasons--adventure, lust for power, etc.--make a solitary move against the USSR, but a collective action cannot be expected.

It is possible that in the future, provided both regimes remain in power, a difference based on ideology could arise and result in a schism; but that is far off.

2a. Q. Is there any possibility of the present regime relaxing its terroristic methods and instituting effective democratic processes?

A. In our opinion such a possibility does not exist. The present regime considers itself to be not a change of government but a change of system. They declare openly that they could be replaced only by force; furthermore that they will never allow elections to take place on the old party lines, which would give

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the people opportunity to express their will. The development of the so-called People's Front is an example. It was formed as a union of all parties. Later it lost its character of a union of parties and became a body in which there were individuals from all old parties (the "honorary" leaders of such) and the old parties lost their individuality, etc. The People's Front was clearly an expedient which the Communist Party considered necessary at a certain stage to consolidate its grip on the country. Their aim was to impress the country that the new regime was not a regime of the Communist Party but a regime of all parties; that the people must not be afraid of measures which will be taken, because such measures will not be dictated by the Communist Party alone as the other parties in the Front will be able to check them and balance them. The Front also had to provide the justification for all the terroristic steps taken in the early days after the "liberation" as steps taken still while under the shadow of war. Also, the Front had to be used on the international field, in conferences, etc., in order to create the same psychological effect as to the character of the regime.

The frequent use of the word democracy is a farce. The higher party members, when among themselves, use it with a derisive smile and consider it a wonderful joker.

The present regime is, by its very program, the opposite of democracy. It is clear that the people, if asked, would never approve of the steps which the Government has taken so far. The people certainly would not have approved the mass arrests, the scandalous way the collaboration trials have been conducted, the complete subjugation to the USSR, the abuse of the US and Great Britain, etc. It is furthermore clear that the people, if asked, will never approve of the steps which the Government is contemplating for the future, especially the collectivization of the farms. The institution of effective democratic processes would mean abandonment of the Communist Party's program, and resignation of power, which the Communists will never do of their free will. On the contrary, they will do everything in their power to strengthen their position which, consequently, means the increase of terroristic methods. Of course, the employment of terroristic methods and the absolute contempt for real democratic ways of government is in full accordance with the Communist Party's theory, its role as the advance guard of the proletariat together with the class unconsciousness of the worker masses, its concept of the state, its concept of morals, etc.

However, there are some statements of the party leaders and there are constitutions and laws in which there are traits which are really democratic. For instance, the constitution provides the freedom of the press, freedom of organization, freedom of speech, the inviolability of the home, the habeas corpus, free election, etc., and someone could ask the question: 'and what about them.'

The answer is: such democratic institutions were never intended to be brought into fulfillment. They were installed for tactical reasons: (1) for propaganda reasons abroad, and (2) for the same purpose within the country--the fulfillment being temporarily delayed because of the "reactionary" activities of the enemies of the people abroad and in the country.

The present regime, being fully aware that in a free election they would not command 5% of the votes, will never permit such elections. They know also, that if a new government came in, the wrath they have kindled in the nation would mean the end of them.

Being the absolute masters of the police, army, etc., they have already planted a sentry before the house of every more or less prominent party member--surely to protect them from the love of the people.

The final aim of the present regime being a monopoly of all the economic resources in the country, complete command of all labor, news, education, etc., monopoly of thought, monopoly of organization, monopoly of power--such an all embracing monopoly, such a giant trust, which has at its disposal the army, the police, the courts, etc. driven and guided by an ideology, intolerant because of its weaknesses, ruthless in method, afraid of the people--all these facts indicate that there will be no relaxing of the methods presently employed, and that there will be more new measures, which will be more undemocratic than those now employed, however difficult it may be to conceive it.

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3. Q. Is there any possibility within the next few years of the present regime being overthrown?

A. There are, of course, many factors to be taken in consideration before an answer could be given. Very much depends on the development of the international situation. If the balance of power in Europe is restored with the recovery of Western Europe's economy under the Marshall Plan, the regaining of freedom for the Eastern European countries is very likely to succeed, and the position of the present regimes in these countries will be considerably weaker, with the loss of the predominant position of the USSR.

Leaving aside for the moment the international factors, and turning our attention to the situation within the country as it is at present, especially to those aspects of it which could help to bring about an overthrow of the present regime, there are the following factors:

- (a) The economic recovery of the country is impossible without obtaining machinery from abroad. Even if it is obtained, there still remains a shortage of skilled labor. Furthermore, the claim for work under the five year plan is so great and requires the exertion of the whole population to such a degree that only by the hardest possible driving of the population can the Government maintain the tempo imposed. It is questionable if it will be able physically to endure it. It is unquestionable that it will not be able to endure it psychologically.
- (b) In spite of the vast propaganda drive of the regime, 95% of the nation is opposed to it. This opposition is at present unorganized, its line of thought, its reaction to the different measures of the regime, differ with the social, national, religious and economic background of the individual person. This opposition has no program, no outline of action and no clearly defined aim except the common hatred of the oppressors and the longing for freedom. As a matter of fact some of the groups entertain a hostile attitude toward each other as, for instance, the underground Kizari and Oshniks. Such an attitude is highly understandable historically.
- (c) No government whatsoever can remain in power for a long period if 95% of the population opposes it, and when the opposition to it is channeled by a common program, to a common aim and common tactics. This is especially true if the government in question is driven by an ideology and is compelled to undertake still new measures more widely unpopular than those already undertaken, and if the government in question is absolutely dependent for the fulfillment of its plans on the complete submission of the population and the demands on the population are extremely strenuous.
- (d) The Army is not secure. Its ranks are dissatisfied with the treatment, food, and long enlistment. Its officers resent the privileges of the party members. The peasant soldiers resent their absence from the soil, where they are badly needed.

Meanwhile, whatever the feeling in the country, there is no doubt that the emotional factor itself is not able to overthrow the regime. There is also no doubt that the existing underground movements, left to themselves, are more or less doomed to be crushed by the overwhelming forces of the Government.

We must always have in mind the tremendous means the Government has at its disposal; the secret police, the army, the means of economic pressure, the propaganda apparatus; also their utter lack of any restraint in choosing the ways of fulfilling their plans, their ruthlessness, etc.

We must always have in mind that the masses in the country cannot be organized within the country and without outside help.

How can it be done?

The nations which had the misfortune to be in the Soviet orbit, and especially those who came into it after the war, have gone through a school which taught them so thoroughly what the Communist regime in reality means, that they will

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use any force possible to get rid of it once they can do something. Inasmuch as the Communists say that the workers in the western countries represent, if disaffected, their revolutionary reserve--which is only partly true--so too can the democratic forces count and depend on the Nations who have been under the Communist yoke as their reserve.

There exists a possibility that the present regime may be overthrown in the next few years, provided:

- (a) The opposition in the country gets help from outside. It is the duty of the exiled leaders to supply the program, tactics and final aim.
- (b) A nationwide movement is created, on the line of the former peasant movements in the past. The methods used must be the methods hitherto employed by the Communist parties throughout the world: Formation of cells on a nationwide scale, brought about by an information and propaganda service.
- (c) The opposition to the Government gradually builds up a force ready to be mobilized whenever the leadership thinks it is needed, the aim being to reverse the situation now prevailing. Up till now the Communist party has been the party which had the means to impose their will, to a lesser or greater degree, on different governments in power in a given country. The Communists themselves have been free of such a danger. Reversal of the situation would call for creation within the country of a force which when called upon would strike, sabotage, demonstrate, create economic difficulties, etc.

Opposition in Yugoslavia

- 4. There is almost universal discontent with the present regime in Yugoslavia, and although there is no organization of the opposition, it is becoming known in every locality who could be depended upon to organize and lead the resistance should it take any active form. The peasants are the most uniformly discontented group because they have experienced more than most other groups of the population the heavy-handed, repressive measures of the Government. The former propertied classes, of course, are equally discontented, since they have not only had most of their property taken away from them but find themselves in an inferior category of citizenship on such matters as rationing.
- 5. The totalitarian nature of the Yugoslav state has been firmly established in that almost no economic, political, social, or cultural organization is permitted to exist except that which is sponsored by the State. Even a group of people who might decide to band together to form a chorus would probably find it necessary to do this through some State organization or not at all. The reports brought back by newspaper correspondents and visiting clergymen are easily explained, since these individuals are permitted to see only prepared demonstrations. Should they engage in occasional conversation with any of the citizenry, the latter know well that a word of criticism of the Government from them will mean immediate imprisonment. It was once remarked that Mr. Daniel de Luce, who has written occasional articles favorable to the situation in Yugoslavia, was not trusted by the Yugoslavs, since they believed he is writing such articles only to permit him to make wide observations inside the country, and that he will write more objectively upon departure. All the instructions of the top officials in the Yugoslav Government come today from Moscow.

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